



SURVEY PROGRAM MONTHLY REPORT

MARCH 2026

Department of Marine Resources - Division of Marine Mammal Research

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Division of Marine Mammal Research Survey Program conducts monthly aerial and vessel surveys for North Atlantic right whales. More information on survey background, implementation and methodology can be found on the [DMR website](#) and in the [2024 DMR Survey Program Annual Report](#). The data presented herein are preliminary and property of the State of Maine and not to be used or distributed without the express consent of the Division of Marine Mammal Research.

This monthly report contains sighting and effort data from aerial and vessel surveys as well as any opportunistic survey efforts conducted during the month of March in 2026 (**Table 1**). Opportunistic surveys include observations collected during other vessel-based DMR activities or any survey efforts that do not follow the standardized line-transect methodology, which entails surveying along pre-determined track lines at 10 knots (vessel) or 100 knots / 1000 feet (aircraft).

Table 1.

Aerial and Vessel Surveys Dates and Effort Totals (km)

March 2026

Date	Survey Type	Effort Distance
03/10/2026	Aerial Survey	792.02
03/15/2026	Aerial Survey	917.39
03/18/2026	Aerial Survey	571.99
03/19/2026	Aerial Survey	831.81
03/20/2026	Aerial Survey	410.51
Total Aerial Effort		3523.72
03/02/2026	Vessel Survey	84.2
03/04/2026	Vessel Survey	66.37
03/09/2026*	Opportunistic Survey	
03/10/2026*	Opportunistic Survey	
03/15/2026*	Opportunistic Survey	
03/19/2026	Vessel Survey	53.88
Total Vessel Effort		204.45



AERIAL SURVEYS

Aerial surveys conducted in March 2026 and total survey effort (km) are listed in **Table 1**. Surveys were primarily flown in a [Beaufort sea state](#) 2 & 3, with visibility ranging from 15 to 30 nautical miles. Species sighted are listed in **Table 2**, and survey track lines and sightings are depicted in **Figure 1**.

Table 2.

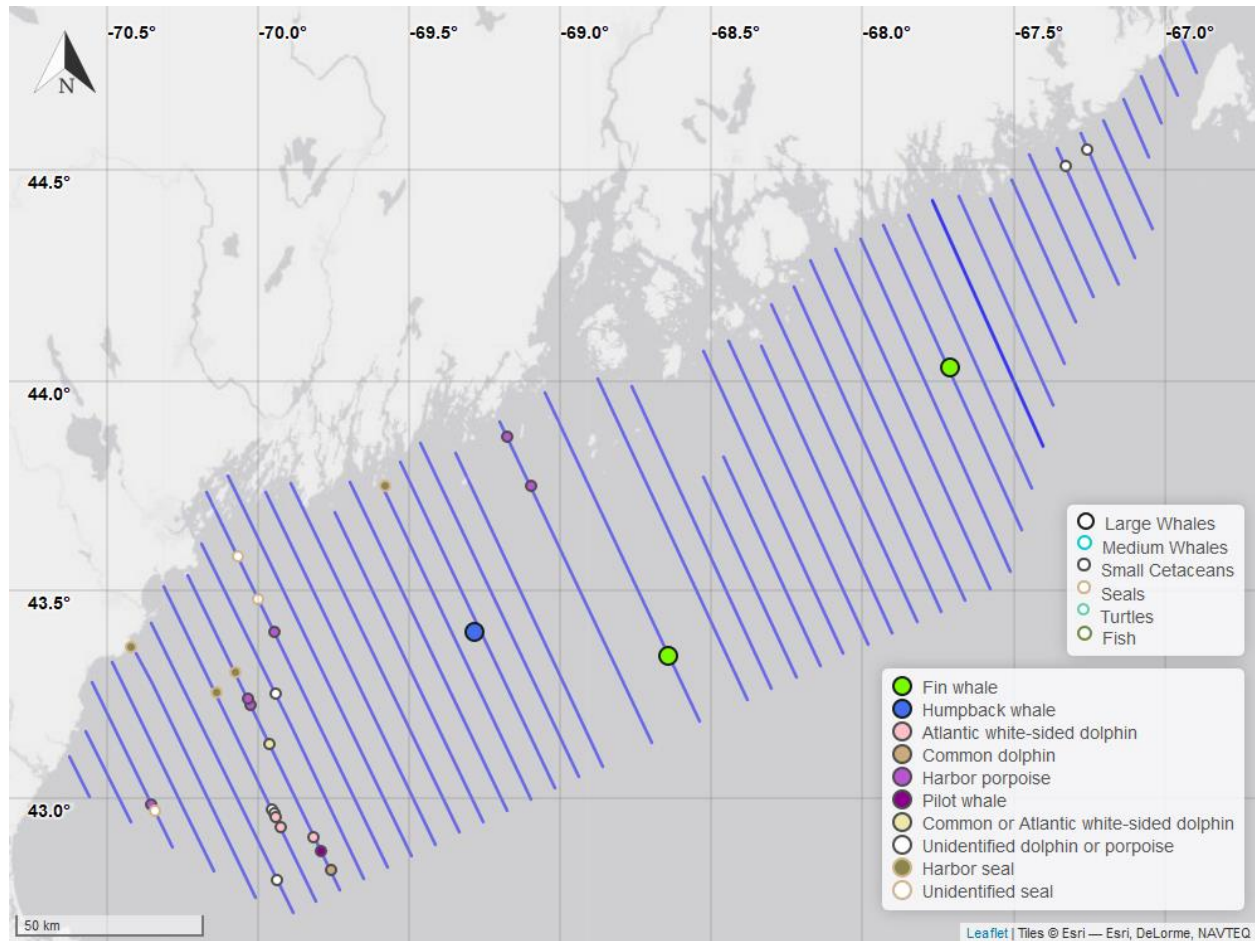
Species Sighted and Total Number of Animals

Aerial Surveys - March 2026

Species	Sightings	Total Animals
Fin whale	2	2
Humpback whale	1	1
Atlantic white-sided dolphin	3	18
Common dolphin	1	5
Harbor porpoise	6	8
Pilot whale	1	4
Common or Atlantic white-sided dolphin	1	1
Unidentified dolphin or porpoise	6	35
Harbor seal	4	10
Unidentified seal	3	4
Monthly Total	28	88



Figure 1.
Aerial Survey Transects and Sightings
March 2026





VESSEL SURVEYS

Vessel surveys conducted in March 2026 and total survey effort (km) are listed in **Table 1**. Surveys were primarily conducted in a [Beaufort sea state](#) 2 & 3, with visibility ranging from 6.5 to 7 nautical miles. Species sighted are listed in **Table 3**, and survey track lines and sightings are depicted in **Figure 2**.

Table 3.

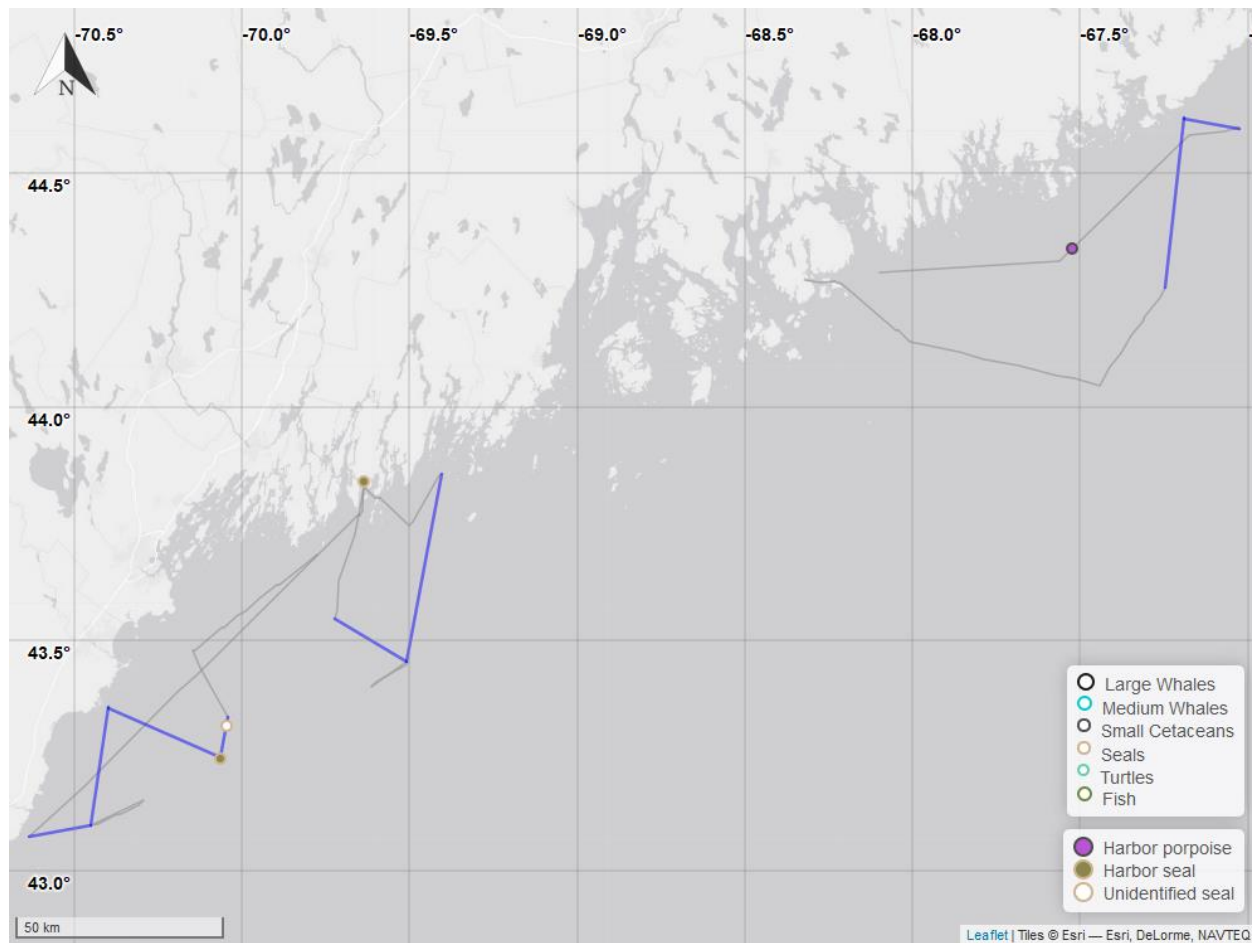
Species Sighted and Total Number of Animals

Vessel Surveys - March 2026

Species	Sightings	Total Animals
Harbor porpoise	1	1
Harbor seal	2	2
Unidentified seal	1	1
Monthly Total	4	4



Figure 2.
Vessel Survey Transects and Sightings
March 2026





OPPORTUNISTIC SURVEYS

Several surveys were conducted in March 2026 in conjunction with Passive Acoustic mooring hot-swaps. Survey dates can be seen in **Table 1**. Species sighted are listed in **Table 4**, and survey transects and sightings are depicted in **Figure 3**.

Table 4.

Species Sighted and Total Number of Animals

Opportunistic Vessel Surveys - March 2026

Species	Sightings	Total Animals
Fin whale	2	4
Fin or Sei whale	1	1
Unidentified rorqual	1	1
Atlantic white-sided dolphin	1	30
Harbor porpoise	1	1
Unidentified dolphin or porpoise	2	4
Total	8	41



Figure 3.
Vessel Survey Transects and Sightings
Opportunistic Vessel Surveys - March 2026

